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ABSTRACT

Certain economic theories can help explain the rise to prominence of parent participation preschools in the 1950s and help to make predictions about their future. Specifically, the long-wave cycle of economic behavior and its explanation of social systems and innovations can be useful. One popular approach is that of the Soviet economist Nikolai Kondratieff, who discovered 50-year cycles in capitalist economies, although governments now may be able to moderate those cycles in the future. A related observation is that clusters of inventions or innovations that have been proposed while the economy descended into a depression have become successful as it recovered. Further, while invention is constant, application of such invention is cyclic: only during a "window of opportunity" provided by an economic downturn will new concepts be seriously considered. Educational developments seem to fit this pattern, including the introduction of the ideas of Locke, Pestalozzi, and Froebel into United States education. Charting the history of the nursery school movement in the United States shows that the years for the introduction of parent co-ops and their rapid rise occurred as the economy rose to a plateau after World War II. At that time, federal funding for war-time nursery schools was terminated, and mothers with increasing numbers of preschool children were dependent upon the co-op community for social support networks. Thus, awareness of economic wave theories may add a critical perspective to analysis of early childhood education history and enable comprehension of current and future situations. (Contains 25 references.) (TM)

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# DO PARENT CO-OP PRESCHOOLS FLOAT ON KONDRATIEFF'S ECONOMIC WAVES?

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## DO PARENT CO-OP PRESCHOOLS FLOAT ON KONDRATIEFF'S ECONOMIC WAVES?

> The term ***parent cooperative*** is used here as a matter of convenience to cover all the educational groups organized by parents for their preschool children and themselves. Alternative terms are nursery schools, cooperatives, nurseries, play groups, preschools, or play centers, depending upon the particular location and setup.
>
> Katherine Whiteside Taylor (1981)

In "doing" history, it is tempting to focus on names and dates, but for a history of parent participation preschools, I am also exploring economic theories to help illuminate their sudden rise to prominence in the 1950s and to make predictions about their future. To be more specific, I have been intrigued by the long-wave cycle of economic behavior and its explanation of social systems and innovations. This approach might be better understood by using the European term, *conjuncture*, to mean an interplay of movements that together make up the direction an economy is going. Europeans, incidentally, tend to make more use of this sort of analysis than we do in the United States.

There are several wave theories and there is much disagreement about which is most nearly correct. We also need to recognize that the entire concept ranks with astrology or Biblical prophecy in the view of many economists. However, one popular approach to the study of educational systems over long time spans is based upon the pioneering work of Nikolai Kondratieff, a Soviet economist who announced in the 1920s that capitalist nations had been repeating "waves" of activity that took about fifty years for each period of growth and decline. After extensive analysis of many economic indicators, he had found a first upward wave that crested around 1760, a second about 1810 to 1817, a third in 1870, and a fourth in the early 1920s, with periods or "plateaus" of prosperity before and after these pivotal dates. Each of these upward waves had emerged from a trough representing the decline into major depressions of the 1730s, 1790s, 1840s, 1890s and 1930s. Kondratieff died as an exile to Siberia in the 1930s, reputedly because he had predicted that

capitalism would recover from the worldwide depression, but Jaap van Duijn subsequently charted the fourth period of recovery from 1938 to 1949 and a period of prosperity from 1949 to 1967. Julian Snyder, in his introduction to the 1984 translation of Kondratieff's writings, presented a convincing argument about their current validity for predicting the future. Other economists believe that we will never again reach the peaks and valleys of past economic waves because strategies have been developed to manage economic systems. John Galbraith's new book, for example, describes the partially successful American and international maneuvers to prevent an anticipated depression of the 1980s. We haven't been having a *depression*, the financial advisers insist. It's only a *recession*, and governments have learned to cope. The popular press not only gives us daily indications of this constant battle against inflation, recession, or other fluctuations but analyzes the repercussions of economic factors upon education and the families of young children.

Particularly relevant to educational history is a confirmation of Kondratieff's suggestion that clusters of inventions or innovations that have been proposed while the economy descended into a depression have become successful successful as it recovered. Subsequent studies made by Mensch indicate that invention is constant but application is cyclic. What seems to happen, he postulates, is that during the plateau of prosperity there is an integrated and mutually supporting combination of previously introduced technologies or beliefs. Incompatible innovations are then rejected as impractical. Only during the "window of opportunity" provided by an economic downturn will new concepts be seriously considered. Innovations then can have their value tested as they ride the upward trend to complacent acceptance.

A cursory look at educational developments during the centuries charted by Konratieff shows that they seem to fit into this long wave pattern. John Locke's ideas about children's learning through sense experiences finally became popular in the United States following the economic trough of the mid-1700s. Pestalozzi's beliefs about child-centered direct experience and the importance of learning through nature came fifty years later, during a similar dip, promoted by Transcendentalist philosophers and by the utopian communities established during the early 1820s, just before the depression of late 1830s and early 40s. Brook Farm, Locke's colony at New Harmony, and the Infant School movement are examples of programs introducing his educational philosophy in time to ride upward toward the

of a second crest just before the Civil War. Since Henry Barnard's enthusiastic report on the Froebelian kindergartens in Europe was published in 1856, during this plateau of economic complacity, it was ignored until the economic downturn almost twenty years later. As Keith Osborn observed, "The years from 1856 to 1870 served as an introductory period (and) growth was slow. The decade of the 1870s would change attitudes and focus new directions" (p 63). Nina Vandewalker and others have documented the dramatic increase from one English-speaking kindergarten in 1870 to 400 in 1880 and perhaps 4000 by 1890, but these were primarily small private or philanthropic classes scattered across the country that served primarily to disseminate the Froebelian approach to early learning. Then, at the opportune time for innovations, a cluster of disciplines was introduced just before the 1893-97 depression to give impetus to the kindergarten as an essential element in American public schools. The depression of the 1890s was marked by formation of the International Kindergarten Union and by new concepts from developmental psychology, anthropology, sociology, and domestic science that supported the kindergarten movement. A 1913 report from the federal Commissioner of Education said that the number of public school kindergartens had increased 133 per cent in a decade, to 7,557, from only 3,244 in 1902. The number of private elementary schools that included kindergartens was also increasing. In accordance with long wave theory, Froebel's German kindergarten was finally able to gain widespread acceptance in the public schools with the economic plateau of the 1920s. We also need to recognize that spin-offs from the Froebelian kindergarten, such as Progressive Education, are also a part of this wave. The nursery school movement was a logical progression, but before I discuss its development I would like to digress to consider further economic theories that particularly relate to our past half century.

Although wave theory was Marxist in origin, even such conservative presidential advisors as Paul Volcker have agreed with the idea of business cycles. Volker saw two types, one short and one longer but irregular, with waves of optimism and speculation and risk-taking alternating with periods of caution. Those swings may be influenced by a variety of more or less objective events, such as changes in population, wars and their aftermath, waves of technological innovation, and so on. He noted that those swings also appear to be influenced by less tangible, even psychological, phenomena. Specifically, a long period of prosperity like that of our "Soaring Sixties" breeds confidence, and confidence breeds new standards of

what is prudent and what is risky. He also noted that the deep recession of 1973 left great caution in its wake. As we consider the relationship of economic cycles to the development of preschools during the short span of recent history, this sort of analysis can help indicate some underlying factors that facilitated development of parent cooperatives.

Economists are not the only ones who relate economics to educational innovations. Milton Senn, for example, in a 1975 monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development, described the 1920s as providing an auspicious climate for development. "It was a period in which faith in science as a solution to problems waxed high and in which an aura of business optimism generated funds for research. With rapid strides being made in medicine, biology, chemistry, psychology, and nutrition, there was high hope that scientists could point the way to improved care of the nation's children ... Child rearing was seen a rational process of applying definite methods to produce certain results." (p 11) This approach led to new emphasis upon pre-parental and parent education and a new awareness of children's needs. The *Journal of Home Economics*, in particular, included many articles describing the incorporation of child observation into high schools and adult education courses. This family focus encouraged Lawrence Frank to use Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial funding for nationwide Child Development Institutes and to promote parent-oriented child study laboratories in home economics departments at this critical time, rather than in schools of education. This, in turn, oriented preschool teacher training toward families and helped validate parent involvement in children's preschool classes.

Wave Theory and the Preschool Movement

Now that I have tried to persuade you that economic wave theory is useful, we can go back to look at the nursery school movement - and the co-op movement in particular - in the light of Kondratieff's theory. You will note that for the past half century the top and bottom of the trough are slightly off target - partly because this was a European theory and our US. economy follows a slightly different path and partly because it doesn't reflect his intention that about ten years should be allowed on each side of the crest and trough. Obviously, the graph would touch bottom about 1935, since it took that long for the spectacular Wall Street crash of 1929 to affect the American public. If I were drawing this, I would have a flat bottomed

trough and a clear plateau to indicate that the economy doesn't just hit bottom like a yo-yo and then bounce up again. This would reflect the continuation of difficult times through World War II, which was - as the graph shows - the beginning of a positive upswing. The important thing to remember is that the opportune time for innovations to be introduced lies just before the bottom of a trough. Recall also that long wave charts show that the economy was already on the downward path during the late 1920s and that van Duijn charted the fourth period of recovery from 1938 to 1949 and a period of prosperity from 1949 to 1967 - the years for the introduction of parent co-ops.and for their rapid increase.

There were a few scattered nursery schools by 1915, but we must keep in mind that early kindergartens included not only four and five year olds but children as young as two years and as old as seven. What we are dealing with here is a change in terminology, and the records don't reflect the number of preschool-aged children actually getting some sort of educational experience. Rather than seeing nursery schools as an entirely new concept, I view them more as a division into age groups of the Froebelian kindergarten. The disciplines that had helped get kindergartens for four and five year olds incorporated into the public schools were also supporting pre-kindergarten education. Many pioneers of nursery education had been leaders of the kindergarten crusade, as I noted long ago in a biographical sketch of Patty Smith Hill.

By 1925, there were probably about 25 nursery schools in the United States, primarily campus demonstration laboratories patterned after those started a decade earlier in England and often with teachers who had trained in England. Their beginnings are recorded in the Twentieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (1929). In the 46th Yearbook, published in 1948, Goodykoontz and others summarized attitudes toward early education and provided a detailed analysis of data from the 1920s to 1946. By 1933, as the depression became acute, administrators of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration established what we now call the WPA nursery schools. By coincidence, the announcement was made three days just before the annual NANE conference and Mary Dabney Davis, Senior Specialist in Nursery-Kindergarten-Primary Education for the US. Office of Education was also the NANE president-elect. Virtually every trained nursery school teacher and child development specialist in the country was immediately involved with implementing the federal recommendations, although their

administration was delegated to the public schools. By 1935, with almost two thousand WPA nursery schools enrolling 72,404 enrolled children, nearly seven thousand adults were given employment and thousand of parents were volunteers. In some cases, as in the Children's Community in Berkeley, private cooperatives became WPA nursery schools and the parents were not only paid a token salary as teachers but got a much-appreciated free lunch. As the economy began to improve, emergency funding was terminated but about half of the nursery schools continued under other auspices. Overlapping with the final years of the WPA programs was the buildup for World War II that accelerated by 1940. New federal funding led to about 3000 Lanham Act day care centers enrolling one and a half million children, thus enabling their mothers to join the war effort. Public housing projects built at this time also incorporated both child care centers and parent participation nursery schools. As Grubb and Lazerson pointed out, this federal sponsorship and public school administration gave "legitimacy" to preschool education (p 212). Goodykoontz and others, through their analysis of factors affecting public opinion about preschool and a listing of various public opinion polls of the 1940s, also pointed out the importance of the federal programs in establishing the importance of preschools. (46th Yearbook, pp. 47-64)

Emergence of Parent co-ops

When federal funding terminated in 1946, it suddenly seemed almost traitorous for a married woman to hold the job that a returning veteran should have, and only 12% of American mothers were employed outside their homes. This became, of course, the Baby Boom era, with 18 million preschool-aged children by 1958, 1/8 more than in 1950, but Theresa Mahler reported in the NANE Bulletin that California mothers who were still employed found long waiting lists for the state subsidized centers. She noted that "An interesting corollary is the mushrooming of private, commercially operated nursery schools" (p 18). In California and across the nation, however, there were thousands of parents who understood the value of preschool education, who needed the "camaraderie" of others, and who couldn't afford tuition at those private preschools.

As my interviews with participating mothers of the early nursery schools indicate so strongly, economic factors meant that many were far from their families of origin and dependent upon the co-op community for the social support networks

that Cochran and others have shown to be necessary for both children and adults. Recent studies have shown us how important this can be as a buffer against stress and its physiological effects. "Camaradery" is still given as one of the reasons parents choose co-ops, and a mutual support system has prevailed since the 1920s. Perhaps this feeling of community has a physiological component that can even be extended to animals, as Levine and co-workers demonstrated with squirrel monkeys. When exposed to stressful stimuli, elevations in serum or plasma cortisol were reduced by half when they had another monkey with them, and the elevations did not occur at all when the animals had a group of "friends" with them when the stressful stimulus is presented. Interestingly, the introduction to Kondratieff's writings also uses the term "comaraderie" to describe the period of economic downswing and the following upswing, noting that "as the economy improves pepole don't want to rock the boat, so a great deal of social stability and tranquility develops" (p 22).

There is general agreement that parent participation nursery schools proliferated as the economy rose to the plateau that Galbraith calls "The Good Years." However, there seems to be no reliable source from which to get actual numbers. I have not yet found accurate records, and I doubt that they exist. One explanation that might be used is that this was a "grass roots" activity, but an intriguing article by Virginia Hine, "The Basic Paradigm of a Future Socio-Cultural System," suggested that there is a type of structure for "movements" (whether political, social, religious, or other) called a "segmented polycephalous network." She added the "ideological bond" to represent the activities of members as they collaborate and the resulting acronym is SP(I)N. Rather than a hierarchical structure such as that in a corporation, a formal organization, or a bureaucracy which is helpless when decapitated, the SP(I)N is composed of autonomous segments which are organizationally self-sufficient, any of them able to survive the elimination of the others. As she expressed it, "An organization chart of SP(I)N would look like a badly knotted fishnet with a multitude of nodes or cells of varying sizes, each linked to all the others either directly or indirectly." (p 52) This describes the structure and the attendant problems of parent participation nursery schools. Each co-op "did its thing" and there was little communication for several years. It was a time of family mobility, and many co-ops started when parents active in one area moved to another and began to organize one in their new community. Individual schools began to cluster into regional councils in the 1940s. It is interesting to note that in 1963, when the National Association for Nursery

Education (NANE) began to list affiliated groups, three of the 60 were regional cooperative councils - and that two of those were Canadian. The first statewide council organized in 1948 in California; my page by page study of The Preschooler, their official bulletin indicates their growth, from 122 member schools in 1954 to almost 200 in 1960 and around 300 in the 1980s. This membership represented only a portion of the centers in operation, as indicated by reports that there were a certain number of member schools and that their officers were hoping to persuade another specific number to join soon. Probably about half of the member schools were sponsored by adult education or recreation departments, with some of those fitting my definition of "parent initiated and operated" and others not. The American Council of Parent Cooperatives, organized by Kenneth Wann, Katharine Whiteside Taylor and others in 1960, and then enlarged and renamed Parent Cooperative Preschools International in 1964, was an umbrella organization that also included a variety of sponsored programs in addition to those defined as truly parent intiated and parent operated.

Katharine Whiteside Taylor's writings have been accepted by most of us for decades, but I have found parent co-ops that she apparently didn't know about. She questioned whether the one begun by faculty wives at the University of Chicago in winter 1915 should be recognized as the first cooperative nursery school in the United States, but I have a 1915 newspaper article describing the regular monthly meeting of the Northside Cooperative Nursery School in Pasadena that appears to meet her criteria. I also have the hand-written account of a Montessori nursery school with parent participation that was opened by Irma and Blanche Weil the previous summer in Berkeley. Were there others? It's possible. Some sources cite the Cambridge Co-operative, which opened in 1923, as being the first. One at Smith College in 1926, established to determine whether a group of mothers could undertake the effort and responsibility involved, seems borderline since it really wasn't organized by parents themselves. The Newcomb Nursery School in Louisiana, first one in the south, was started by parents in 1926 and incorporated into Tulane University in 1940 after being used for seven years as a student lab setting. Children's Community, the one identified with Katharine Whiteside Taylor, opened in 1927 and the Berkeley Hills School followed in 1928; both are still active. By 1930, when the AAUW published Taylor's pamphlet, *The Children's Community, An Experiment in Cooperation*, she listed four co-ops (including the one at Smith) that had been started *by* professionals *for* parents and only the two in

Berkeley as having been initiated by parent groups. An article in the January 1934 *Journal of Home Economics* described another Berkeley co-op that had opened in 1931 - but it was not named and nobody seems to be able to identify it. This article is particularly interesting because it explains the process by which parents organized and operated a preschool - with a balance of $72 at the end of its first year. There is a reliable 1932 report by Mary Dabney Davis that says the number of nursery schools had increased from 3 to 262 during the decade from 1920 to 1930 and that 18 of these, or a quarter of the private schools, "have been organized and are controlled by parents of children enrolled in the school." (p 1)

I had fully expected to be able to make a neat graph comparing the parent cooperatives with Kondratieff's waves, assuming that I could confirm their rapid increase during the 1950s and 1960s. The data is simply too spotty and inadequate to do that. For example, Keith Osborne estimated that there were a thousand in the peak year of 1960. A Merrill-Palmer study in 1950 showed 254 co-ops out of 3377 US. nursery schools and child care centers. After an extensive search in 1950, Betty Montgomery found 274 schools that fit the definition, and noted that "One-third as many schools in this study were established in 1950-51 as were founded in the preceding ten year period between 1940 and 1949." In my own survey of professional journals and popular magazines, there were about as many articles about co-ops in the 1950s as in all the other decades put together. NAEYC questionnaires are not very helpful, with one in 1970 showing that there were 284 parent cooperatives represented in a membership response of 4,779. Even Katharine Whiteside Taylor admitted that it was impossible to know how many there were during the organizational years - or even at the time she updated *Parents and Children Learn Together* in 1981. She estimated that there were about 700 by the mid-50s, when articles in professional journals were describing the movement with terms like "mushroom growth" or as "the fastest growing program in the country" Her claim of 1500 in 1966 apparently included some individual members of PCPI, reflecting a problem that continues until the present.

But where are we today? It's equally hard to say. For example, I have a listing of 260 preschools licensed as parent cooperatives in California, but keep finding others that are not on the list - including a couple in San Diego area. Some do not need to be licensed because they are in public schools or are sponsored by recreation departments. Some are listed as church schools or categorized under

some other heading. This confusion is not a recent phenomenon - the 1950 Merrill Palmer survey I cited above included the Children's Community Nursery School as part of the University of California,which it never was. I find that computer searches show much information about "child care" and some about cooperatives other than nursery schools, but it isn't specific. The *Encyclopedia of Early Childhood Education*, which is replete with information for other topics, is not much help and the NAEYC Information Services doesn't know either. At this point, my feeling is that the total number appears to have become stabilized and my guess is that there are about a thousand at the present time. Enthusiastic parents, alumni, and directors have devised strategies to keep their schools operating despite formidable obstacles. Many, despite difficult licensing complications, accomodate working parents by becoming full-day centers. Some employed parents are able to continue participation through flex-time or the use of personal leave time. Many directors report participating grandparents. Just as the economy seems to be floating in an air of uncertainty, so do the co-ops of today.

Mandel's Marxist interpretation of the contrast between the good years before 1970 and those that have followed seems to fit nicely here, for he wrote "Is it not remarkable how, throughout the whole period of accelerated economic growth of 1948-68, the credo of 'growth optimism,' 'guaranteed full employment,' and 'technological rationality' reigned supreme, both within the realm of academic economics and sociology and among economic advisors and economic policy shapers? And when we passed from the expansionist long wave toward the depressive long wave, isn't it a striking coincidence that there suddenly appeared so many prophets of doom and of 'zero growth'?" (p 98) When I read this, I wondered if has been this sort of thinking, rather than any real tabulation of surviving co-ops, that has made us feel that they have vanished like many other good things in our modern world. Beyond this, however, lie the statistics about paid employment as a necessity for the mothers of young children. Those years between the late 1940s and the recession of the 1970s were a time when mothers were able to feel relatively guilt free in staying home, but I will refrain from citing all those numbers you have seen. There are all kinds of intricacies that could be explored, such as the Gross National Product. In the 1950s, meals were cooked at home, baking was usually done "from scratch" or from one of those new mixes from a box proclaiming that "Nothin' says lovin' like something from the oven." Halloween costumes were improvised and many clothes were not only made at home but were

made over from other garments. Now, with the corporate world taking over many of the duties of those people called *housewives*, their former home-produced goods distort the GNP figures.

Obviously, the countless fathers and mothers who were involved with establishing and managing preschools were competent individuals; there was a self-selection process in the commitment they made to what Hymes, in his 1972 interview with Katharine Whiteside Taylor, called "the meetingest places I know." We might ask why they chose to spend their time and energy this way. Ghez and Becker, in a study conducted at the National Bureau of Economic Research, used historical data for an analysis of family resource allocation that not only fits into economic wave theory but may explain other aspects of co-ops. Although school participation was not specified, they arrived at three premises (indicated here by my underlining) that seem to explain the willingness of parents to devote not just weekly classroom participation, but evening meetings and committee work and maintenance days for their children's nursery school:

1) Families take account of expected future events when making decisions, which would relate to the newly acquired knowledge concerning the value of a preschool education for the optimal development of a child,

2) Families see time as a scarce resource, related to both the labor supply and consumption of goods. This ties in with the low monetary value placed on women's work time during this period and what economists call "nonmarket activities" as an valued and appropriate choice

3) Families engage in activities that require both time and goods for their realization. This attitude could be applied to the popularity of co-op nursery schools, since they were viewed as a logical and financially worthwhile extension of the family function.

This concept was expressed much more simply by a young mother who recently told me that she remembered with pleasure having attended a parent participation nursery school as a child. She explained, however, that her own sons were in full time child care because her time was too valuable to spend it as a co-op mother and her income was needed to pay off debts, including the new van and an awesome mortgage.

Perhaps the most distinguishing aspect of co-ops was pointed out by Katharine Whiteside Taylor in the talk she gave at the "Fiftieth Anniversary" of the movement

in 1966. She said that "Their success has not depended upon the continuance of the same leadership over the years, but rather upon the continual development of new leaders, often with continuing and vigorous growth when the pioneering and succeeding officers go on to other activities and new ones take their places." Beyond this, I am finding that the enthusiasm of participating parents not only extends far into their alumni years but that many have become leaders of early childhood education. For example, the NAEYC "President's Page" written by Lilian Katz for the January (1994) *Young Children* begins with a statement that "Like many other 'senior' early childhood educators, my interest in the profession grew out of five years of participation in parent cooperative nursery schools in California more than 30 years ago. To this day I count as deeply valuable much of the experience and insight that I gained during those years with my three children and especially with their teachers!" I recently found what was probably her first published article - in a 1959 California Co-op Council newsletter. As Publicity Chairman of San Mateo Parents' Nursery, she wrote about the frustrations of having been in four locations in 12 years. Now, she reported, they were actually moving into their own new building, with construction partially financed through one of the first bank loans given to a co-op. There are many others now prominent in early childhood education who tell similar stories. Leah Adams, the new OMEP president, also got her start as a co-op mother - we recently reminisced about such economy measures as cutting snack napkins into quarters. And the "In Memorium" page of the November (1994) *Young Children*, noted that "It was the local parent-cooperative nursery school to which she sent her two sons, William Palmer and John Pitman, that pulled Lillian Weber onto the track of teaching." Her dissemination of information about the British Infant School was one of the major educational influences of the 1970s. California professor Libby Byers, in her 1957 doctoral dissertation, listed eight early childhood leaders for whom the Childrens Community of Berkeley had been "a turning point in their lives." And since 1952, when I helped organize Bakersfield Play Center and became its first director, I have continuously had some sort of direct involvement with parent co-ops. Development of significant professional roles for those of us who were involved with the early parent participation preschools ties into long wave theory, since we were unknowingly poised - like surfers who execute maneuvers when that special breaker rolls in toward the beach - to take advantage of the upward movement of early childhood education from the late 1940s to around 1970.

Conclusions

Can we use long wave theory to predict the future of parent cooperatives? Results of the November 1994 elections seem to validate Klein's prediction that "By the 1990s ... a new social mood will emerge. ... People will be cautious and willing to settle for less. Women, in all probability, will become more willing to assume the 'traditional' female roles." (p 22) As I stated at the beginning, with government economists now using long wave theory as part of their battle to stabilize the economy, who knows? Awareness of economic wave theories will, however, add a critical perspective to our analysis of early childhood history and will enable us to use that understanding to help comprehend current situations. Economic theory can prove to be one more of the valuable tools that we can use in historical research and in teaching the historical background of early childhood education.

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Background information was gleaned from several professional publications including the *Journal of Home Economics* and *NANE Bulletin*, from newsletters and manuals of various parent participation councils and schools, and from interviews or correspondence with many individuals. This paper will be incorporated into a history of parent participation preschools that will be published by the Center for Cooperatives, University of California at Davis.

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